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ABSTRACT

Two papers report results of an investigation of the attitudes of public school teachers regarding two topics: the mandates of P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act and mainstreaming of educable mentally retarded (EMR) students into elementary classes. The first paper discusses the development and field testing of an instrument examining five areas: referral, assessment, staffing, individualized educational programs, and implementation of P.L. 94-142. Responses of 133 special education teachers are listed for 52 statements perceived as significant. The second paper summarizes responses of 673 teachers toward the role of EMR students, EMR teachers, and elementary teachers in the mainstreaming processes. No significant differences were noted between perceptions of teachers of learning disabled, EMR, and severe behavioral problem students. (CL)

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Special Education Teacher's Perception of Problems Encountered in Implementing P. L. 94-142

Two Papers

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SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER'S PERCEPTION OF PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN IMPLEMENTING P. L. 94-142

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ABSTRACT

A research questionnaire, Problems Encountered by Special Educators in Implementing P.L. 94-142, was designed and field tested in 1979 in order to investigate special educators' perceptions of mandates of this law.

Items on the questionnaire were clustered under five sub-categories: a) the Referral Process, b) Assessment, c) Staffing, d) Individual Educational Programs, and e) Implementation of P.L. 94-142. Content validity and internal consistency reliability were established for each sub-section as a result of the field test.

The revised questionnaire was sent to 182 special education teachers. Seventy-four percent or 133 respondents returned usable questionnaires.

Descriptive statistics and analysis of variance was used to analyze responses to each item and sub-section of the questionnaire.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF MANDATES OF P.L. 94-142

Research Process - Results

Dr. Veronica Gold

In the Winter of 1980, a research team from the Department of Special Education at Bowling Green State University conducted a study to gather information regarding special education teacher perception of a) the extent to which federal mandates of P.L. 94-142 were being implemented in public schools of Northwest Ohio and b) problems and their possible solutions relative to these procedures (Gold and Williams, 1979).

A review of existing literature on teacher perception of mandates of P.L. 94-142 indicated that special eudcation teacher perception regarding the mainstreaming issue, in particular, had not been explored. However, numerous research studies had investigated the perception of general educators toward this issue. Since the special education teacher is intensely involved in processes related to implementation of P.L. 94-142, it was determined that a critical need existed to attempt to measure the degree to which teachers perceived these mandates to be successfully implemented.

The research process began with the development of a questionnaire whose items focused on major mandates of P.L. 94-142. These items were clustered in five sub-sections entitled as follows: a) the Referral Process, b) the Assessment Process, c) Staffing, d) the IEP, and e) Suggestions for Implementation. These sub-sections were primarily created in order to focus sequentially on procedures required by the law. Items contained under each sub-section were written based on the experience of

the researchers and the text of the law as it appeared in the Federal Register (1977).

There were a total of one hundred and four items on the original questionnaire. This questionnaire was distributed to thirty (30) special education teachers in order to establish its internal consistency reliability. These teachers were asked to respond to each item on the questtionnaire through a five point Likert scale as follows:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

Internal consistency reliability was computed through the use of the following formula:

$$\alpha = \frac{n}{n-1}\left[1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} S_i^2}{S^2 T}\right]$$

Following are internal consistency reliability factors based on a possible value of 1.00 for each of the five sub-sections of the questionnaire.

a) The Referral Process: α = .403

b) The Assessment Process: α = .866

c) Staffing: α = .771

d) The IEP: α = .834

e) Suggestions for Implementation: α = .861

Because of the limited number of items clustered under the subsection Referral Process, internal consistency reliability score was low. Therefore, no items were removed from this sub-section. Items falling under other sub-sections of the questionnaire were removed or retained based on the degree to which they correlated with other items in the same subsection. If computer analysis indicated correlation of .500 or less, the

item was removed. If the item's correlation with others in the same sub-section was .500 or greater, that item was retained.

Content validity of the questionnaire was established based on responses of thirty (30) special education supervisors or administrators in Northwest Ohio. Individuals in this group were given a copy of the questionnaire in which items a) were not categorized and b) placed in random order. These individuals were then asked to read each item and indicate in which of the five (5) categories they felt the item should be placed.

Responses of these supervisors or administrators were tabulated on a grid. Items for which 50 per cent or more of these respondents agreed on any one of the five category choices were placed within that category. Any item for which there was less than 50 per cent categorical agreement was eliminated.

The questionnaire was revised down from 104 to 78 items following analysis for internal consistency reliability and content validity. This revised questionnaire was disseminated to a random sample of special education teachers in Northwest Ohio.

The pool from which the random sample was drawn consisted of all EMR, LD, and SBH teachers in a 13 county region in Northwest Ohio. All SBH teachers were included in the sample due to the small number of these individuals employed in the region.

The total number of special education teachers asked to participate in the study was one-hundred and eighty-two (182). Of this number, 52 LD, 53 EMR, and 28 SBH teachers responded for a total of 133 respondents or 74 per cent return.

Sub-programs Condescriptive, Frequencies, and Oneway from the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, and Bent, 1970) were used to analyze the data from responses to the questionnaire. Analysis of all items on the questionnaire indicated that a majority of special education teachers did perceive the following issues as significant as they occur in schools. Their perception of significant items are as follows:

6. General education teachers are as likely to refer a withdrawn, shy child for special education service as they are an aggressive, acting-out child. 60% disagree

16. All children referred for special education services are assessed in the area of pre or vocational skills. Over 50% disagree

17. A variety of individuals, in contrast to one person, are responsible for completing portions of the multi-factored assessment. 50% undecided to disagree

18. Assessment of minority students referred for special education service is accomplished with non-discriminatory test instruments. Undecided

20. In the pre-educational assessment process, diagnostic tests are given greater priority than achievement tests. Undecided

25. The prospective special education teacher is a member of the placement team. 33% disagree 50% agree

27. The referred student, where appropriate, is included in the placement meeting. 50% disagree

30. Parents are encouraged to deliberate outside of the school environment regarding their placement recommendation. 56% undecided

31. Parents are encouraged to ask questions and/or comment during the placement meeting. 85% agreed

32. Educators on the placement team refrain from using educational terms/acronyms unfamiliar to parents. 50% agree

33. There is evidence that the members of the placement team are sensitive to needs of parents. 70% agree

34. In the event that English is not the primary language spoken in the home, an interpreter is present during the placement meeting to assist the educators and parents to communicate with each other. Undecided

35. Parents are informed of the possibility that special education service may extend beyond one year in duration for their child. 80% agree

36. Parents are always notified in writing of the results of the placement meeting and are given notice of their rights regarding placement. 80% agree

37. Prior to placement of a handicapped child in a special education class, an IEP is developed. 77% agree

38. Educational objectives written by the special education teacher correlate with annual goals established for the student by the placement team. 83% agree

39. When a handicapped child is mainstreamed into a regular education class, the general education teacher is asked to assist in developing instructional objectives. 53% undecided to disagree

40. During the IEP conference, parents are invited to provide input on goals and objectives within the IEP. 79% agree

41. During the IEP conference, students (where appropriate) are asked about their views regarding their educational program. 62% undecided to disagree

42. Parents are asked to sign the IEP as an indication that the school has observed their legal right to aid in the development of their child's IEP. 90% agree

43. The IEP conference is scheduled at the time and place most convenient to the parents. 75% agree

44. When parents cannot attend the IEP conference, results of this conference are sent to the parents. 86% agree

45. Review of the student's special education program are conducted, at a minimum, on an annual basis. 94% agree

46. When a general or special education teacher or parent perceives the need to make a change in the IEP, a periodic review conference is arranged where this change is discussed and possible made. 67% agree 33% disagree

47. During the annual review, the student's progress according to objectives cited in the current IEP is discussed and new goals as well as educational services required are formulated. 85% agree

48. When parents are not in attendance at the annual review conference, results of the review are sent to them within 15 days following the scheduled conference. 70% agree 30% undecided to disagree

49. The least restrictive alternative for some special education students in my school is defined as full-time placement in a special education class when deficits indicate an inability to function independently in general education classes. 74% agree

50. The least restrictive alternative for some special education students in my school is defined as participation in general education classes when the student can function there independently and special education service in areas where the student displays deficits. 78% agree

51. When general education teachers in my school are responsible for the instruction of special education students, they are willing to modify their instructional strategies to accommodate the special education student's learning style(s). 40% agree 35% disagree

53. The principal in my building sets a tone which encourages the general acceptance of and support for the least restrictive alternative. 65% agree

54. Grades given special education students by general educators reflect that student's individual achievement in contrast to a comparison of that student's ability to compete with other students in the general education class. 50% undecided to disagree. 50% agree

55. General education teachers in my school consult me regarding the grades they assign the special education student in the general education class. 61% undecided to disagree 39% agree

56. Oral communication for cooperative planning purposes occurs regularly between general and special education teachers on behalf of special education students each has in common. 50% agree 50% disagree

57. General education teachers in my school are sensitive to the social factors affecting the self-concept of the special education student participating in general education classes. 50% agree 30% disagree

58. General education teachers in my building set the tone for acceptance of the special education student in the general education class. 51% agree 22% disagree

59. Reasons for lack of acceptance of special education students by general educators in my school can be attributed to feelings of inadequate training and preparation on the part of these general education teachers. 50% agree

60. Reasons for lack of acceptance of special education students by general education teachers in my school can be attributed to these teachers' resentment of additional responsibility of preparation and instruction for the handicapped student. 50% agree

61. Reasons for lack of acceptance of special education students by general education teachers in my school can be attributed to negative attitudes on the part of these general education teachers toward the handicapped. 33% agree 50% disagree

63. Mandates of P.L. 94-142 could be implemented more successfully if practicing administrators had additional training in exceptionalities. 66% agree

64. Mandates of P.L. 94-142 could be implemented more successfully if practicing administrators had additional training in implementation of the law P.L. 94-142. 66% agree

65. Mandates of P.L. 94-142 could be implemented more successfully if practicing administrators had additional training in parent counseling. Over 50% agree

66. Mandates of P.L. 94-142 could be implemented more successfully if practicing special education teachers had additional training in human relations skills to facilitate communication with other educators. Over 50% agree

67. Mandates of P.L. 94-142 could be implemented more successfully if practicing education teachers had additional training in parent counseling. 75% agree

68. Mandates of P.L. 94-142 could be implemented more successfully if special education teachers had additional training in multi-factored assessment. 75% agree

69. Mandates of P.L. 94-142 could be implemented more successfully if special education teachers had additional training in writing IEP's. Over 50% agree

70. Mandates of P.L. 94-142 could be implemented more successfully if special education teachers had a sufficient amount of regularly scheduled time for planning record keeping, assessment, and communication with parents and professionals. Over 90% agree

71. Mandates of P.L. 94-142 could be implemented more successfully if general education teachers had additional training in working with exceptional children. 87% agree

72. Mandates of P.L. 94-142 could be implemented more successfully if general education teachers had additional training in human relations skills to facilitate communication with other educators. 60% agree

73. Mandates of P.L. 94-142 could be implemented more successfully if general education teachers had additional training in working with the parents of exceptional children. 70% agree

74. Deficits in the knowledge base regarding P.L. 94-142 can be met through inservice on a local level. 74% agree

75. Deficits in the knowledge base regarding P.L. 94-142 can be met through inservice by IRC. 50% agree

76. Deficits in the knowledge base regarding P.L. 94-142 can be met through inservice by the university. 60% agree

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DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS AMONG SBH, EMR, AND LD TEACHERS IN RELATION TO PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN IMPLEMENTING P. L. 94-142

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the attitudes of public school elementary teachers towards mainstreaming of EMR children into elementary classes. The instrument used was comprised of four distinct clusters of statements: attitudes of teachers towards a) the role of the EMR student in the mainstreaming process, b) the role of the EMR teacher in the mainstreaming process, c) the role of the elementary teacher in the mainstreaming process, and d) general mainstreaming concepts.

Data utilized in the study were derived from a Likert - type instrument developed by the investigator and a panel of experts. Of 768 teachers included in the study, 673 responded. Chi square and multivariate analysis of variance were used to analyze the data.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY SPECIAL EDUCATORS IN IMPLEMENTING P.L. 94-142 AS PERCEIVED BY L.D., E.M.R., & S.B.H. TEACHERS

Submitted By: Lynn Burkholder

As mentioned previously the research questionnaire covered the following five areas: 1) referral process, 2) assessment, 3) staffing, 4) individual educational programs, and 5) implementation of P.L. 94-142. The response rate was as follows: 80% L.D., 70% E.M.R., and 68% S.B.H., for a total return rate of 74%.

A one way analysis of variance was used to determine if there were differences in the perceptions of the three different types of special education teachers on each of the questionnaires five sub-sections. Differences were considered statistically significant if the probability of the resulting F ratio was equal to or less than .05.

Results indicated that there was no significant difference between perceptions of L.D., E.M.R., and S.B.H. teacher concerning the subsections of assessment, staffing, I.E.P.'s, and implementation of P.L. 94-142. On the subsection of referral process, there was a significant difference between perceptions of teachers of the learning disabled, and those of the educable mentally retarded. L.D. teachers had a more positive perception of the referral process than did E.M.R. teachers.

Even though there was only one sub-section that indicated a significant difference in perceptions between groups, there were certain items, on the questionnaire, which showed that teachers were in agreement that problems existed or did not exist.

An analysis of total group mean by item was computed for each sub-section. Any item with a group mean of 3.5 or greater indicated item agreement as perceived by the special education teachers. Group means less than 2.5 indicated item disagreement as perceived by the teachers.

On the sub-section of Referral Process all teachers seemed to indicate that general education teachers are not prone to let race influence their judgement regarding decisions for referral for special education placement. They perceived that there were also individuals in the school system delegated to monitor and initiate the assessment process after a referral is made.

In the sub-section of Assessment, the special education teachers agreed that every child referred for special education service is given a multi-factored assessment provided parental consent for such assessment is obtained. They perceived, however, that not all children are assessed in the area of pre or vocational skills.

Under sub-section three, Staffing, these teachers agreed that placement meetings are conducted on all students referred for special education services and that the school psychologist, an administrator or supervisor, and the child's parents are included in the placement meeting. There was also evidence that the members of the placement team are sensitive to the needs of these parents and do provide them with notice of their rights regarding placement.

In sub-section four, concerning I.E.P.'s, special education teachers perceived that educational objectives written by the special education teacher correlate with annual goals established for the student by the placement team. Parents are also invited to provide input on goals and objectives within the I.E.P. during the conference. Review of the student's special education program is conducted, at a minimum, on an annual basis.

The last section of the questionnaire involved Implementation of P.L. 94-142. Teachers agreed that one of these two general conditions existed. The least restrictive alternative for special education students is defined as either full time placement in special education classes when deficits indicate an inability to function independently in the general education class or involves participation in general education

classes when the student can function there independently. Special education teachers perceived that special education students are assisted in developing coping behaviors which will enable them to deal with a variety of responses from general education students.

The major problems resultant from implementation of mandates of P.L.94-142 as perceived by these special education teachers were that:

1) Mandates of P.L. 94-142 could be implemented more successfully if administrators had additional training in exceptionalities and implementation of the law as well as training in parent counseling.

2) These mandates could also be implemented more successfully if special education teachers had additional training in parent counseling as well as in multi-factored assessment.

3) Special education teachers perceived that these mandates could also be implemented more successfully if general education teachers had more training in human relations skills to facilitate communication with other educators and with parents of exceptional children.

The last item on the questionnaire asked teachers to respond to the main problem that exists in their school due to mandates of P.L. 94-142. Six major problems were noted by the special education teachers. The main problem that existed was lack of planning time during the school day for record keeping, assessment, I.E.P. writing, and communication with school personnel and parents. Other problems were: a) the attitude of administrators and general education teachers towards special education students and the laws surrounding them, b) the delay time between referral, assessment completion, and placement, c) lack of implementation of the least restrictive alternative, d) scheduling students into regular education classrooms, and e) lack of understanding of P.L. 94-142 by general and special education teachers and its application according to state standards.

In summation, special education teachers perceived that solutions to these problems could be met through inservice

programs developed through an instructional resource center, on a local level, or by colleges and universities.